

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /101 W

----- 041084

R 280900Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9286

INFO AMEMBWZ Y BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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DEPT PLS PASS DEPT OF LABOR

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, AS

SUBJ: SIXTH CONFERENCE OF ASIAN LABOR MINISTERS

1. SUMMARY. SIXTH ASIAN LABOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE
CONCLUDED SEPTEMBER 20-24 MEETING IN TEHRAN WITH
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PRAISE FOR IRANIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CATALOGING

OF COMMON ECONOMIC WOES FACED BY ASIAN DEVELOPING NATIONS, BUT SHOWED LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE ACHIEVEMENT OTHER THAN TO CALL ON ILO FOR MORE ASSISTANCE AND TO CHANGE NAME OF NEXT CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. CONFERENCE ATTENDED BY 70 MINISTERS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM 23 ASIAN AND PACIFIC COUNTRIES(INCLUDING MONGOLIA). PLENARY SESSIONS HELD IN TEHRAN SEPTEMBER 20-22, FOLLOWED BY TWO-DAY TOUR OF ISFAHAN, SHIRAZ AND PERSEPOLIS SPONSORED BY GOI. PROGRAM INCLUDED GROUP AUDIENCE WITH SHAH ON SEPTEMBER 21, DURING WHICH SHAH URGED ELIMINATION OF "INEQUALITIES EXISTING IN LABOR CONDITIONS IN SOME PARTS OF THE WORLD" AND GREATER EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON LABOR PROBLEMS BETWEEN ASIAN LABOR CONFERENCE AND OTHER WORLD BODIES. GOI MINISTER OF LABOR AND SOCIAL WELFARE AMIR QASSEM MOINI SERVED AS ELECTED CHARIMAN OF SIXTH CONFERENCE; NEW ZEALAND LABOR MINISTER J.B.P. GORDON ELECTED CONFERENCE VICE CHARIMAN; INDONESIAN MINISTER OF MANPOWER, TRANSMIGRATION AND COOPERATIVE SUBROTO, AND AUSTRALIAN MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS STREET ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF PANELS FOR CONSIDERATION AGENDA TOPICS.

3. TWIN AGENDA TOPICS OF "LABOR PRODUCTIVITY--INCENTIVES AND MEASURES" AND "TRAINING AND MOBILITY OF LABOR" WERE SUFFICIENTLY BROAD TO RESULT IN SOUND AND LIGHT SHOW AS DELEGATES PROCEEDED TO CATALOG VIRTUALLY ENTIRE RANGE THEIR RESPECTIVE LABOR PROBLEMS IN PLENARY SESSIONS, BUT JUDGING FROM LACK OF PROGRESS ON SUBSTANTIVE PROPOSALS TOPIC APPARENTLY PROVED UNMANAGEABLE FOR SEPARATE PANELS FORMED TO CONSIDER INDIVIDUAL TOPICS IN DETAIL. GENERAL CONSENSUS, AS EXPRESSED IN POST-CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE, ONLY RECOGNIZED NEED TO HARNESS TECHNOLOGY AND INCREASED LABOR PRODUCTIVITY TO "SELF-RELIANT NATIONAL OBJECTIVES", INCLUDING SOCIAL JUSTICE, EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, AND ELIMINATION OF 200 MILLION UNEMPLOYMENT IN ASIAN-PACIFIC REGION. OTHER PANEL SUGGESTIONS INCLUDED RECOMMENDATIONS THAT:

--A. ILO SHOULD FORMULATE BASIC CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF LABOR PRODUCTIVITY;
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--B. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM BE UNDERTAKEN TO PROMOTE EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE AWARENESS OF ADVANTAGES OF INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY;

--C. ILO, ON REQUEST, ASSIST GOVERNMENTS IN DETERMINING WHAT WOULD BE FAIR DIVISION BETWEEN WORKERS AND MANAGEMENT OF INCREASED PROFITS RESULTING FROM INCREASED LABOR PRODUCTIVITY;

--D. PRIORITY BE GIVEN TO INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY, SINCE MOST ECONOMIES IN ASIAN-PACIFIC REGION

ARE AGRO-BASED;

--E. TRAINING OF BOTH AGRICULTURAL AND NON-AGRICULTURAL RURAL POPULATION BE REGARDED AS MAJOR COMPONENT OF INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY;

--F. PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD BE TAPPED FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING, AS WELL AS PUBLIC SECTOR;

--G. BETTER BALANCE BE CREATED BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL MANPOWER;

--H. RIGHTS OF MIGRANT WORKERS SHOULD BE ADEQUATELY PROTECTED.

4. COMMUNIQUE'S STRESS ON "CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH," "FRANKNESS" AND "CLEAR SENSE OF PURPOSE" IN PROCEEDINGS PROMPTED ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEHRAN JOURNAL TO COMMENT IN ARTICLE ON SEPTEMBER 23 THAT "IN SPITE OF 'CLEAR SENSE OF PURPOSE,' MAIN CONCRETE DECISION TAKEN BY MINISTERS WAS TO CHANGE NAME OF NEXT CONFERENCE" TO "CONFERENCE OF ASIAN AND PACIFIC LABOR MINISTERS." SUGGESTION FOR NAME CHANGE MADE BY FIJIAN LABOR MINISTER RATU DAVID TONGANIAVALU IN VIEW OF INCREASING ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF COUNTRIES IN PACIFIC AREA. SEVENTH CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN AUCKLAND, 1978.

5. RESIDUAL UNEMPLOYMENT IN ASIAN-PACIFIC REGION, USUALLY ESTIMATED DURING CONFERENCE AT 300 MILLION, CLEARLY CENTRAL PROBLEM ON MINDS OF ASIAN LDC DELEGATES, AND AT LEAST SOME OF EFFUSIVE PRAISE BY SEVERAL SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES FOR IRANIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SHAH'S "GUIDANCE TO NEIGHBORING STATES" PROBABLY PROMPTED BY THEIR INTEREST IN IRAN AS NET LABOR IMPORTER. PAK, BANGLA DESH AND SRI LANKAN DELEGATES ALL DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INDICATED INTEREST IN EXPORTING SURPLUS LABOR TO IRAN. BY CONTRAST, BULK OF REMARKS BY JAPANESE, ROK AND NEW ZEALAND DELEGATES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DIRECTED AT PROBLEMS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING, STABLE GROWTH, WAGE SYSTEMS, WELFARE PLANS, REDUCING WORK HOURS AND OFFERING THEIR TRAINING SERVICES TO ASIAN LDCS. LDC CONFEREES ALLUDED TO BUT DID NOT DIRECTLY ADDRESS CONTRADICTORY PROBLEMS OF TRYING TO INCREASE LABOR PRODUCTIVITY WHILE AT SAME TIME TRYING TO ABSORB MASS UNEMPLOYMENT IN THEIR COUNTRIES.

6. ONLY STRIDENT NOTE DURING CONFERENCE SOUNDED BY INDIAN LABOR MINISTER K.V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY, WHO HARANGUED AUDIENCE THAT THIRD WORLD POVERTY WAS "ONLY THE ECONOMIC COROLLARY OF CENTURIES OF COLONIALISM." REDDY DESCRIBED LDCS AS HAVING "ALMOST INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY OF RAW MATERIALS AND HUMAN RESOURCES," BUT CLAIMED THEIR DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS HAMSTRUNG BY "SICK" AND "MORALLY INTOLERABLE" INTERNATIONAL

ECONOMIC ORDER IN WHICH "SQUALOR OF MILLIONS IS NECESSARY
CONDITION FOR THE OPULENCE OF A FEW."

7. PREPARED REMARKS OF MONGOLIAN DELEGATE, CHAIRMAN OF
STATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND WAGES MYATAVYN LKHAMSUREN,
WERE IN LOW KEY, MAKING POINT ONLY THAT ORGANIZATION OF
LABOR "FROM POINT OF VIEW OF WORKING PEOPLE'S INTERESTS"
WAS BEST VEHICLE FOR INCREASING LABOR PRODUCTIVITY. HER
STATEMENT CITED THREE PERCENT ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH AND
FOUR PERCENT ANNUAL GROWTH IN MONGOLIAN NATIONAL INCOME
BETWEEN 1960-1975, AND FOR SAME PERIOD ASSERTED FOLLOWING
ANNUAL LABOR PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH RATES BY SECTOR: INDUSTRY
5.7 PERCENT, AGRICULTURE 3.7 PERCENT, BUILDING 6.6 PERCENT.
STATEMENT ALSO CLAIMED 2,158 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS
FOR EACH 10,000 POPULATION.

8. POUCHING LIST OF DELEGATES, AGENDA TOPICS AND COMMUNIQUE
TO ADDRESSEES.
HELMS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR, LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TEHRAN09706
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760366-0724
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760910/aaaaaims.tel
Line Count: 188
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <09 SEP 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SIXTH CONFERENCE OF ASIAN LABOR MINISTERS
TAGS: ELAB, AS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006